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18 Cryptofiction! Science fiction and the rise of cryptozoology

Justin Mullis

Cryptozoology (literally, "the study of hidden animals") is a popular term that colloquially denotes the vocation of "monster hunter." Historians of the field trace the beginnings of cryptozoology to the mid-20th-century activities of two men: Scottish-born naturalist Ivan T. Sanderson (1911–1973) and French-Belgian zoologist Bernard Heuvelmans (1916–2001), who together are credited with coining the term (Poole 2011, 134, and Regal 2011, 18–19).[1] As this chapter will demonstrate, however, the central obsessions of cryptozoology predates the word itself and can readily be found in the realm of fantastic fiction. Tales of this type first appeared during the last half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, first in prose – often accompanied by striking illustrations – and later on film. Today, science fiction stories of this nature remain popular among a small cadre of cryptozoologically minded enthusiasts and through the work of dedicated "cryptofiction" writers (Bosky 2014, 109–14).

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What follows is a partial survey of cryptofiction as it exists both in print and on film, with the aim of demonstrating that these tales have repeatedly anticipated cryptozoologists' claims regarding many "actual" cryptids, suggesting that such monsters originate not in the backwoods of the world but in the minds of imaginative individuals.[2] Furthermore, this essay will also contend that what cryptozoology as a field has done is not so much invent a new science as transform science fiction into a lived practice: a way of being and existing in the world apart from mainstream or conventional views of reality.[3]

Early-20th-century cryptofiction

One early example of cryptofiction is the novel *In Search of the Unknown* (1904) by American writer Robert W. Chambers (1865–1933). This story centers around the adventures of an ornithologist named Gilland, who works at the New York Zoological Gardens (i.e., the Bronx Zoo), from whence he is repeatedly dispatched by his boss, Professor Farrago, to go and find various cryptids. The first five chapters comprise the book's best-known arc, having originally been published in advance of the novel in *Ainslee's*

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Magazine in August of 1899 as a short story titled "The Harbor-Master."[4] Here Gilland is sent to retrieve a pair of presumably extinct Great Auks from a cantankerous old man named Burton Halyard, who lives on a small island off the coast of New York state with only his live-in nurse to keep him company. Doubtful that such birds actually exist, our narrator is even more dismissive of Halyard's suggestion that an elusive "amphibious creature resembling a man" also resides near the island. Upon arriving, Gilland learns that not only are the Great Auks real, but so is the fabled Harbor-Master, a creature that Halyard explains is "a man with gills like a fish who lives in the ocean" that has "taken to hanging around my cove," as he is evidently "attracted [to] my nurse!" (Chambers 2004, 274 and 285).

In Search of the Unknown includes several other adventures as well. One is Gilland's trip to an unexplored valley where mammoths still roam alongside "the fabled dingue": a fictitious monodactyl woodchuck that makes a sound like a bell (Chambers 2004, 307). In Paris, Gilland meets a Belgian countess who has recovered the eggs of the Ux: a mythical giant Tasmanian bird. Another is a journey by Gilland and Professor Farrago to the Florida Everglades, where they hunt for a race of anomalous anthropoids – said to be the basis for Ponce de Leon's fabled Sphinx – that have the ability to turn invisible to avoid capture and an unmistakable fondness for apple pie.[5] After this, the novel ends with a story in which Gilland encounters a living dinosaur called a Thermosaurus.

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Chambers's book perfectly encapsulates many of the key themes and ideas of cryptozoology. By making the majority of its creatures prehistoric holdovers found to still be alive in the world today – such as the Great Aux, mammoth, and the fictitious Thermosaurus –, Chambers invokes what paleobiologist Darren Naish calls the "prehistoric survivor paradigm," in which various cryptids are identified as animals otherwise known only from the fossil record and thus considered extinct (Hill 2014, Web). Others, like the Lovecraftian Harbor-Master, have referents in real-world cryptozoology in the form of merbeings: alleged amphibious humanoids, which some notable cryptozoologists have advocated as existing (Coleman and Clarke 1999, 158–60). Published at the very beginning of the 20th century, *In Search of the Unknown* demonstrates that the field of cryptozoology was already a fully realized set of ideas, albeit in the realm of fantastic fiction, well in advance of Sanderson and Heuvelmans's coining of the word in the late 1950s.

In Search of the Unknown was hardly the only story from this period that foreshadows the advent of cryptozoology as a lived practice. In 1909, famed German zoo pioneer Carl Hagenbeck (1844–1913) published his autobiography *Beasts and Men*, detailing his many exciting exploits in the exotic-animal trade. Hagenbeck makes the extraordinary claim to have heard tales of "the existence of an immense and wholly unknown animal, said to inhabit the interior of Rhodesia." Allegedly, this animal was described by locals as being "half elephant, half dragon," a likeness that to the German zoo tycoon's mind "can only be some kind of dinosaur, seemingly akin to

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the brontosaurus." While Hagenbeck returned from a hunt for this creature empty-handed, he assured his readers that, "[n]otwithstanding this failure, I have not relinquished the hope of being able to present science with indisputable evidence of the existence of the monster . . . for if this prodigious dinosaur, which is supposed to have been extinct for hundreds of thousands of years, be still in existence, what other wonders may not be brought to light?" (Hagenbeck 1912, 96–7)

Hagenbeck's claim of a living dinosaur roaming the swamps of Africa resulted in a minor media sensation the following year, with newspapers from "New York to New Delhi" jumping on the story (Loxton and Prothero 2013, 270). Later in 1949, this rogue African brontosaurus was given a name, Mokèlé-mbèmbé, by the German-American science and science fiction writer, Willy Ley (1906–1969) in an article entitled "Do Prehistoric Monsters Still Exist?" for *Mechanix Illustrated* magazine. Ley's article also gave the alleged dinosaur a home: the Congo River basin. (Ley 1949, Web). Paleontologist Donald R. Prothero has argued that the entire story was a publicity stunt. The same year that *Beasts and Men* was published, Hagenbeck opened a new dinosaur park at his Hamburg Zoo featuring life-size dinosaur sculptures, including one of a brontosaurus (Loxton and Prothero 2013, 270–1).

Equally important, however, is that dinosaur-themed stories either starring brontosaurus and/or set in Africa were very popular in the early 20th century. Examples include Frank Savile's pulp adventure novel *Beyond the Great South Wall* (1901) about a lost Mayan civilization in Antarctica that worshiped a living brontosaurus and Henry Francis's short story "The Last Haunt of the Dinosaur" (1908), about an African expedition that stumbles upon a living dinosaur. Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan series also placed dinosaurs in the mythical African country of Pal-ul-don. The tremendous popularity of such tales during this time can be attributed to the then-recent discovery of the brontosaurus by paleontologists. The first-ever mounted brontosaurus skeleton was introduced to the public in 1905 at the American Museum of Natural History, followed by the unveiling of a mounted skeleton of the similar looking diplodocus at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh in 1907. The very next year, replicas of this same diplodocus skeleton went up at museums in Paris and Berlin, as well as a slew of other countries around the world. At the same time, German paleontologists in Tanzania were digging up even larger fossils of related species, all of which helps to account for the introduction of the idea, first in fiction, then in "fact," that living brontosaurs could be found somewhere in the remote jungles of Africa.

But American and European readers enchanted by the idea of prehistoric monsters living in Africa would soon discover that some were also evidently lurking in lakes and lochs in their own backyards. In 1928, Hal Grant's short story "The Ancient Horror" appeared in the April issue of *Amazing Stories* magazine. The protagonist, a big-game hunter named Rutherford, avers that he once encountered a monster in an artificial lake while

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vacationing somewhere in rural America. Rutherford explains that the beast in question – a huge plesiosaur – is an "aquatic antique" arising from the "Mesozoic era" some "500,000,000 [years ago]" when "monsters and giant reptiles inhabited the earth and its water." He further conjectures that while most of these creatures had died out millions of years ago, a few "had probably been caught in some of the great caverns that were formed, and unable to escape, had adapted themselves to their changed environment," and remained there ever since. Rutherford then speculates that a cavern must have recently opened up beneath the lake, allowing the monster to escape its subterranean abode. (Grant 2009, 164–5).

The idea of a prehistoric monster lurking in an artificial lake may seem silly, but it is consistent with actual claims made by cryptozoologists today. To date, there are at least three man-made lakes within the United States said to harbor such beasts. These include Herrington Lake and Kentucky Lake, both in Kentucky, and Lake Norman in North Carolina (Radford and Nickell 2006, 150–1 and Manley 2007, 90–1). Likewise, Rutherford's explanations for the presence of the monster is also in keeping with cryptozoological tradition, which frequently posits that such creatures originate from or hide in subterranean caves. Folklorist Michel Meurger traces this idea back to Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), which featured an underground lake replete with prehistoric monsters inside a hollow earth (Meurger and Gagnon 1988, 291). Allen A. Debus likewise writes that stories about prehistoric monsters lurking in caves became a popular motif in science fiction following the publication of *Journey*, with the earliest example being American writer Wardon Allan Curtis's surreal short-story "The Monster from Lake LaMetrie" (1889) (Debus 2006, 32–5 and 166–7).

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"The Ancient Horror" pales in comparison, however, to the most famous lake-dwelling beast of all time: the Loch Ness Monster of Scotland. Though reports of this creature did not appear until 1933, the idea of such a cryptid lurking somewhere within the British Isles can be found much earlier, in *The Lair of the White Worm*, a horror novel by *Dracula* author Bram Stoker originally published in 1911. Set in Derbyshire, England, the tale centers around an area called Diana's Grove, the former site of pagan religious rites. It is eventually revealed that the grove features in a local legend about a monstrous albino serpent, or "wyrm," lurking in its depths. One of the protagonists, a monster hunter named Sir Nathaniel, speculates that "[in] England there were originally vast plains where the plentiful supply of water could gather. The streams were deep and slow, and there were holes of abysmal depth, where any kind and size of antediluvian monster could find a habitat. . . . There must have been places and conditions which made for greater longevity, greater size, greater strength than was usual" (Stoker 2007, 187).

Daniel Loxton has proposed another source for the Loch Ness Monster: the 1933 monster-movie classic *King Kong* (directed by Merian C. Cooper

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and Ernest B. Schoedsack). Loxton's argument zeroes in on the most famous Nessie sighting of all time, that of Londoner George Spicer, which was reported in the *Inverness Courier* on August 6, 1933. In a letter to the *Courier*, Spicer claimed that he and his wife had been driving alongside Loch Ness in broad daylight when suddenly a creature resembling "a dragon or prehistoric animal . . . crossed my road about fifty yards ahead and appeared to be carrying a small lamb or animal of some kind. It seemed to have a long neck which moved up and down, in the manner of a scenic railway, and the body was fairly big, with a high back" (Loxton and Prothero 2013, 129–30). As Loxton notes, one of the many iconic scenes in *King Kong* involves a swamp-dwelling brontosaurus, which chases the human explorers out of its murky home and onto land, grabbing one of them in its jaws.

But the smoking gun comes from a radio interview with Spicer himself, conducted shortly after his letter was published. Asked point-blank if the creature he had seen crossing the road that day resembled the "diplodocus-like dinosaur in *King Kong*," Spicer's reply was an enthusiastic yes, though he qualified that the creature he had seen had a "larger and more flexible" neck than the one in the movie (Loxton and Prothero 2013, 133). Spicer's *Kong*-influenced sighting was soon picked up and developed by filmmakers eager to cash in on Nessie's popularity – as well as the success of *King Kong*. In 1934, the first-ever Loch Ness Monster movie, *The Secret of Loch Ness* (1934, directed by Milton Rosmer), was released less than a year after Spicer's story had appeared in the *Courier* (Berry 2002, 350–4).

Nessie would not be the last cryptid to feel the influence of *King Kong*. Originally released in 1933, *Kong* was periodically rereleased over the next several decades, with the summer of 1952 being of particular note, with the film grossing close to $300 million. At the time, this was a box-office record, one that ushered in the Golden Age of Science Fiction films, many of which featured monsters and aliens prominently (Warren 2010, 10). In his study of cult cryptozoological films, Stephen Bissette has identified a number of recurring themes that would also soon surface in allegedly "real-life" sightings of monsters. These include stories of creatures attacking local populations, expeditions to exotic places to retrieve physical evidence of monsters, and battles between scientific explorers and various cryptids (Bissette 2017, 58). True to his claim, the first books published by Bernard Heuvelmans and Ivan T. Sanderson – *On the Track of Unknown Animals* (1955) and *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life* (1961), respectively – replicated many of these elements.

In 1951, mountaineers Eric Shipton and Michael Ward sent photographs to the *Illustrated London News* showing what appeared to be a four-toed, human-like track that they had discovered on the slopes of Mt. Everest.[6] The news media instantly linked them to legends of the yeti, a type of wild man in Tibetan folklore, a suggestion that prompted further attempts to track it down. In response to this craze, filmmakers wasted precious little time in producing a bevy of pictures about the Himalayan beast. One

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of these films, the Japanese movie *Half Human* (1958, directed by Ishiro Honda), was closely modeled after *King Kong* and exerted a particularly powerful influence on Loren Coleman, one of the most prolific and popular cryptozoologists working today (Coleman 2011, 1–3 and 17–23). Coleman has written about his first viewing of *Half Human* as a 12-year-old boy and the impact it made on the rest of his life: "It [Honda's film] was fascinating, for even though I knew it was fiction, there appeared to be an underlying truth to this tale of an expedition in pursuit of an unknown species of hairy, upright creature. One does not pick their entries into mysteries, I suppose; for me this just happened to be the one" (Coleman 2003, 2).

As the 1950s progressed, the craze over the yeti quickly gave way to another anomalous primate when a logger named Jerry Crew walked into the offices of *The Humboldt Times*, a California newspaper, with a pair of giant plaster footprints and a story about how his crew was being terrorized by a monster they called "Bigfoot." The paper ran the story on October 8, 1958, complete with a picture of Crew holding his plaster casts of the creature's oversized feet. That day, a legend was born.[7] Once again, it did not take long for the entertainment industry to cash in on this new monster – only this time, its venue of choice was the new medium of television. In October 1959, the pioneering sci-fi TV series *One Step Beyond* (1959–1961) aired the episode "Night of the Kill" (Season 2, Episode 5), about a young boy named David Morris who had gone missing for four days in the California woods. Upon being rescued, family and friends are puzzled by David's claim that he was looked after by a friendly "giant," which eventually turns out to be a benevolent Bigfoot (Bissette 2017, 23–5).

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The creature took on a decidedly more savage edge in the men's adventure magazines of the 1960s and 1970s. Successors to pulp science fiction magazines and precursors to such publications as *Maxim* and *FHM*, men's adventure magazines offered a mixture of science fiction–tinged stories and soft-core spreads of female models, as well as articles on other manly topics like true crime and war stories (Buhs 2009, 95–6). These magazines also regularly featured cryptozoological-themed pieces, in both the form of fictional stories and allegedly factual articles by writers like Ivan T. Sanderson. One of these – a featured story entitled "I Encountered the Abominable Snowman" in the September 1960 issue of *Rage* – featured cover art in which a disconcertingly human-like yeti is shown ripping open a woman's blouse, exposing her lingerie-clad breasts. Interior artwork showcased a more troll-like beast performing the same act. By combining cryptids and sex, such images seem calculated to appeal to the readership demographics of men's adventure magazines (Deis, Coleman, and Doyle 2015, 221–3).[8]

Another cryptid first introduced through men's adventure magazines was the thunderbird: an oversized version of the already-very-large South American Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*) but said to inhabit North America and be capable of picking up an adult human in its talons or even taking down a commercial airliner! Thunderbirds were largely the pet project of

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cryptozoologist Mark A. Hall (1946–2016), who promoted their existence throughout his life (Coleman and Clarke 1999, 103–4 and 236–8). Despite the fact that their name is drawn from Native American mythology, Hall identifies the first modern report of thunderbirds as being the article "Monster Bird That Carries Off Human Beings!" written by Jack Pearl, which was published in the May 1963 issue of *Saga*. Jack Pearl was a pseudonym of Jacques Brian Pearl (1923–1992), a writer of Harlequin romance novels (Hall 2008, 36–40). The article was pure fiction but with various facts sprinkled throughout to provide a veneer of verisimilitude (Deis, Coleman, and Doyle 2015, 173–91). This is a classic ploy of writers of fantastic fiction, but as a result, Hall took "Monster Bird" at face value, as have other cryptozoologists since (Radford 2014, 148 n. 4). For the truly committed cryptid aficionados, however, revelations like these do little to impede the enthusiasm they have for these beasts or any of the other monsters that have joined them in the ever-growing cryptozoological pantheon.

Present-day cryptofiction and cryptozoology

Today, the genre of cryptofiction has shrunk to a niche genre of popular literature published by a small handful of science fiction writers. Of these undoubtedly the most popular and successful is Steve Alten, author of *Meg: A Novel of Deep Terror* (1997), a story about the megalodon; a prehistoric species of 60-foot shark which according to conventional science went extinct some 1.5 million years ago. *Meg* proved to be a tremendous hit for Alten, spawning six sequels and a 2018 big-budget Hollywood film. Significantly, there was virtually no interest from cryptozoologists in megalodons prior to their appearance in popular fiction (Coleman and Clarke 1999, 154). In this case, it was Peter Benchley's novel *Jaws* (1974) that first spawned interest in prehistoric sharks, a fact that has been largely forgotten due to Stephen Spielberg's 1975 film adaptation, in which the creature is an extant Great White. Other megalodon novels, all preceding Alten's *Meg*, include Robin Brown's *Megalodon* (1983), George Edward Noe's *Carcharodon* (1987), and Charles Winson's *Extinct* (1997).

Historically, one of the hallmarks of cryptozoology is the claim that their various creatures are simply unknown animals of an entirely naturalistic, as opposed to supernatural, origin. But in recent years, paranormal explanations have become increasingly common within the field of cryptozoology, the two most popular theories positing that cryptids are either extraterrestrial or "ultraterrestrial" in nature (Hill 2017, Web). Undoubtedly the most popular cryptid to have the extraterrestrial label applied to it is the vampiric chupacabra, first reported in late 1995 in Puerto Rico, where it was blamed for a rash of mysterious livestock deaths. In his 2011 book *Tracking the Chupacabra*, skeptical paranormal investigator Benjamin Radford shows that the chupacabra bears an uncanny resemblance to the monster from the then-recently released sci-fi movie *Species* (1995, directed by Roger

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Donaldson), part of which is set in Puerto Rico, and that the initial chupacabra witness, a woman named Madelyne Tolentino, has acknowledged that she had watched *Species* shortly before her chupacabra sighting (Radford 2011, 130–6).

Even more recently, the cryptozoological community has found itself enamored with so-called dogmen. These cryptids, which look exactly like what their name suggests, have become extremely popular largely thanks to the books of Linda S. Godfrey, a journalist-turned-cryptozoologist. (Krulos 2015, chapter 12). Many cryptozoologists believe that the creatures are "ultraterrestrial" in nature, meaning that they hail from a parallel reality, popping into our space-time continuum via interdimensional portals. If this sounds like overt science fiction, it is probably because the "ultraterrestrial hypothesis" was originally developed by one-time science-fiction writer John Keel (1930–2009), who became a popular paranormal investigator in the early 1970s. Stephen Bissette writes that the hit Netflix series *Stranger Things* (2016–present) has helped to popularize Keel's hypothesis in its depiction of the Demogorgon, a monster from a parallel reality that terrorizes the citizens of a small town (Bissette 2017, 213–14). It is hard to resist the conclusion that *Stranger Things* has helped spawn interest among cryptozoologists in inter-dimensional monsters like the dogmen.

While many skeptics have characterized contemporary cryptozoologists as harboring a fundamentally antiscientific mind-set, ethnographic research on this community finds just the opposite to be true (Naish 2017, 218–21; Hill 2017, Chapter 4). Cryptozoology enthusiasts typically have a very positive view of science, hoping that their research will contribute to it. Unfortunately, the vast majority of self-professed cryptozoologists lack even the most rudimentary knowledge of those fields that intersect with their interests, such as zoology, paleontology, or evolutionary biology (Regal 2011, 173). Eschewing the rigors of science, they publish for a popular audience rather than for experts. Further, their various hunts have failed to yield compelling evidence for the existence of any cryptid. To compensate for their lack of expertise, Sharon Hill claims that cryptozoologists draw their ideas about how science works from popular cryptozoologically themed "reality" TV shows like *Monster Quest* (2007–2010) and *Finding Bigfoot* (2011–2018) (Hill 2017, 61–2). But as this chapter has shown, an even more significant source is that of science fiction stories and films. In other words, cryptofiction serves as a model for how they conduct themselves as working "scientists." Such was the case with Bernard Heuvelmans himself, whose decision to become a zoologist and, later, a cryptozoologist was catalyzed at an early age by his love for the stories of Jules Verne and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. As a scientist, Heuvelmans went on to model himself after the protagonists of these stories: an eccentric genius prone to arrogance, combativeness, and beliefs in defiance of mainstream science (Miller 2015, 149–51).

Usually, this kind of confabulation between fact and fiction indicates what Michael Barkun has described as "fact-fiction reversal," in which

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the disparate categories of fact and fiction are transposed (Barkun 2013, 29). While this phenomenon is prevalent across many occulture-oriented groups,[9] there are limits to how well this explanation accounts for practitioners of cryptozoology. Instead, what one finds here are individuals adopting the fantastic explanations put forth in science fiction – i.e., the existence of monsters – as solutions to real-world "mysteries," such as the unexplained death of livestock, the discovery of enigmatic footprints, or, most frequently, the sighting of an unfamiliar animal.

An excellent example of how cryptozoologists think about science fiction and its relationship to the natural world is Loren Coleman's analysis of a 1955 incident in which an Indiana woman, Naomi Johnson, was pulled underwater by something while swimming in the Ohio River.[10] Though Mrs. Johnson never claimed to have seen what attacked her, Coleman proclaims it was a merbeing. The evidence? A lengthy passage from John Baxter's landmark book *Science Fiction in the Cinema* (1970), describing the iconic scene in *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* in which the Creature swims beneath Julie Adams, at one point making a pass for her kicking legs with his clawed hand (Coleman 2002, 93–4). Coleman has clearly used a scene from the film to prematurely solve an unexplained event, ignoring more plausible explanations, such as the possibility that Mrs. Johnson was attacked by a large fish or turtle or caught her leg on a submerged log. He also ignores the fact that Johnson's story appeared at the same time the Black Lagoon trilogy of films was being released in theaters.[11]

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Rather than being victims of confabulation, cryptozoologists would seem to choose fanciful explanations because they wish to live in a more enchanted world. Historian W. Scott Poole notes that the appearance of cryptozoology as a lived practice coincided with a time when many Americans were becoming increasingly cynical about the role of science in their lives and society (Poole 2011, 134–5). One can see this in the writings of Ivan T. Sanderson, who would often rant about the shortcomings of the scientific establishment, making accusations that modern scientists had become dogmatic and authoritarian in their outlook – though what he really seemed to be saying was that modern science was boring.

Skeptical researcher Daniel Cohen (1936–2018), in his book *Myths of the Space Age* (1967), actually agrees with Sanderson, writing that while "it is genuinely exciting to believe in ghosts or flying saucers or the Abominable Snowman or the Lost Continent of Atlantis," the truth is that "real science is nowhere near so thrilling, no matter how well it is presented. A rigorous logical approach to evidence is hard and restrictive, it destroys the beloved romantic myths and is going to be resented" (Buhs 2009, 258). Science, it can be argued, has taken much of the mystery out of the world for many, leaving us trapped in what sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) famously called the iron cage of modernity. For their own part, cryptozoologists were trying to find a way out of that cage.

The allure of cryptozoology is hardly limited to aficionados of occulture. In 2013, the Christian fundamentalist Creation Museum opened a new

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exhibit entitled "Dragon Legends," which focused on claims that dragons are real, historical, and biological creatures. This was an elaborate gallery show, replete with gorgeously designed graphic depictions of different dragon myths throughout history arranged chronologically. Cryptozoology has a long and curious history with Young Earth Creationism, with this new exhibit being just one of the most recent examples (Laycock 2010, Web). Anthropology of religion scholar James S. Bielo, who conducted an ethnographic study of the staff of the Creation Museum during the time this exhibit was conceptualized and executed, rejects the argument that exhibits like Dragon Legends are a testament to anti-intellectualism. Rather, Bielo reasons that Dragon Legends offered Creation Museum attendees a more entertaining alternative to the kind of experience they would have at a conventional museum (Bielo 2016, 98–100).

Similarly, it is my contention that practitioners of cryptozoology have chosen to embrace what they see as a more entertaining alternative to conventional science. Rather than the "hard and restrictive" process described by Cohen, cryptozoologists have opted for a version that is more romantic and exciting. Theirs is a version of science as imagined by authors of cryptofiction. Enacted by actual cryptozoologists as a lived practice, "scientists" are no longer bound to academic laboratories but can head off, like modern-day knights, into unknown regions to slay the last "real" dragons. But as paleontologist Louis Jacobs once cautioned, we should remember that such exploits, no matter how entertaining or personally fulfilling, "are not scientific expeditions. They are science fiction" (Jacobs 1993, 243).

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Notes

1 There is some debate over who exactly coined the term "cryptozoology," Sanderson or Heuvelmans, or even possibly someone else (Loxton and Prothero 2013, 16–17).
2 "Cryptid" is the slang term used by cryptozoologists to refer to the monsters they seek. It was coined by John E. Wall in 1983 (Coleman and Clarke 1999, 75–7).
3 Other scholars have approached the subject of cryptozoology from a myriad of different angles. For discussions on cryptozoology as it relates to class, see Buhs 2009. For cryptozoology as a religion, see Laycock 2010, 2018. For cryptozoology as an outgrowth of division between amateur and professional science, see Regal 2011. For cryptozoology as reaction to anxiety over the increase in endangered species, see Dendle 2006.
4 "The Harbor-Master" owes whatever longevity it may have primarily to American horror author, H.P. Lovecraft, who borrowed the idea from Chambers and developed it in his 1931 novella *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (Price 1998, 3).
5 Interestingly, this part of Chambers's novel anticipates an episode of *The X-Files*; "Detour" (Season 5, Episode 4), featuring invisible humanoid creatures that reside in the Florida Everglades and are ultimately connected to Ponce de Leon.
6 As of 2017, ecologist Daniel C. Taylor has conclusively demonstrated that Eric Shipton's famous photo of yeti tracks is of tracks of an Asian black bear, distorted by melting snow (Worrall 2017, Web).
7 In 2002, it was finally revealed that the footprints found by Crew were a hoax having been perpetrated by his boss, the notorious local prankster Ray Wallace (Buhs 2009, 241–2).

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8 For a more thorough discussion of cryptofiction and male sexual fantasy men's adventure magazines, see Buhs's *Bigfoot* (Buhs2009, 159–68).
9 This phenomenon is prevalent across many occulture-oriented groups, including Ancient Astronaut theorists, ufologists, and people who believe in angels. For Ancient Astronaut theorists, see Colavito 2005. For ufologists and angelologists, see Clark 2003. For a general overview of "fact-fiction reversal" as it pertains to the paranormal, see May 2016.
10 Loren Coleman reports that Johnson's incident occurred on August 21, 1955, which is the date most frequently repeated in the cryptozoological literature dealing with this story. However, the earliest known report of this incident – aside from press reports – comes from ufologists Isabel Davis and Ted Bloecher's *Close Encounter at Kelly and Others of 1955* (1978), which has it occurring on August 14 (Davis and Bloecher 1978, 181–2). Davis and Bloecher's work primarily deals with the celebrated Hopkinsville Goblin incident, which did occur of August 21, and it was this incident which appears to have first brought attention to Johnson's story, which was not reported on by the press until after August 21 (Gross 2008, Web). This fact seems to have led to the conflation of the dating of these two incidents in later reports. What makes this discrepancy even stranger is that Davis and Bloecher's source for the Johnson case was Loren Coleman!
11 Universal Studios released a trilogy of Black Lagoon films: *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954, directed by Jack Arnold), *Revenge of the Creature* (1955, directed by Jack Arnold), and *The Creature Walks Among Us* (1956, directed by John Sherwood). Johnson's encounter with a mysterious something in the Ohio River occurred just months after the second of these films was released. Merbeings were clearly popular in 1955; in November of that year, *True Weird* magazine published the story "Fish With Human Hands Attacked Me" by Arthur A. Dunn. (Deis, Coleman, and Doyle 2015, 44–57).

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